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FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0579
INFO RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 6309
RUEHDJ/AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI 3165
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1710
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1885
RHMFISS/CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEPADJ/CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ
RHRMDAB/COMUSNAVCENT
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RUMICEA/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCXONI/ONI WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 000385

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/AF, DS/TIA/ITA, DS/IP/SPC/SO, AF/E,
AF/RSA, LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/04/2029

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SUBJECT: REPORTED OCTOBER ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AGAINST
PRESIDENT ISAIAS

REF: ASMARA 273

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for Reason 1.4 (d)

11. (C) On 10/28/09 President Isaias narrowly missed being killed in an IED attack east of Barentu, according to a reliable embassy source. The source told RSO that Isaias visited a micro-dam project in Tessesnei and then traveled east in a motorcade to Keren. Outside of Barentu, an IED exploded, killing three soldiers in the lead vehicle. The attack left Isaias' vehicle (the second car in the convoy) unharmed. The embassy source stated the IED was planted by disgruntled elements of the Eritrean military. Ethnic Kunamas, the main source of violence in the region, were not implicated. The source stated his girlfriend's brother was one of the soldiers killed in the lead vehicle.

12. (C) The embassy source also stated there is growing disenchantment within the Eritrean government (GSE) and the military. Muslim Eritrean officials are upset at being marginalized by the majority Christian Tigrinya speaking makeup of the GSE. An increasing number of high ranking military officers are frustrated over the suffering caused by the policies of the Isaias administration.

13. (C) Post Comments: This report has not been corroborated or reported in the Eritrean media. A separate assassination attempt against Isaias by an Eritrean soldier was reported in 08/2009 (Reftel). Post continues to hear reports of growing anger over Eritrean government policies by the military and other elements of Eritrean society.
McMULLEN